

Thomas Jefferson to Philip Mazzei, March 17, 1801, The Works of Thomas Jefferson in Twelve Volumes. Federal Edition. Collected and Edited by Paul Leicester Ford.

TO PHILLIP MAZZEI J. MSS.

Washington, Mar. 17, 1801.

My Dear Sir, —Your letter of Dec. 6. is just received, and a person leaving this place tomorrow morning for Paris, gives me a safe conveyance for this letter to that place. I shall depend on Mr. Short's finding a conveyance from thence. Yet as I know not what that conveyance may be, I shall hazard nothing but small and familiar matters. My health, which wore a very threatening aspect at the date of the letter alluded to in yours, became soon reestablished and has been very perfect ever since. My only fear now is that I may live too long. This would be a subject of dread to me. It is customary hereto "wish joy" to a new married couple, and this is generally done by those present in the moment after the ceremony. A friend of mine however always delayed the wish of joy till one year after the ceremony, because he observed they had *by that time* need of it. I am entitled fully then to express the wish to you as you must now have been married at least three years. I have no doubt however that you have found real joy in the possession of a good wife, and the endearments of a child. The vetches you were so good as to send by Baltimore came safely to hand; and being by that time withdrawn from my farm into public life again, I consigned them to a friend. The seeds which I sent you were of the Cymbling (*cucurbita vermeosa*) & squash (*cucurbita melopipo*) the latter grows with erect stems; the former trails on the ground altogether. The squash is the best tasted. But if you will plant the cymbling and pumpkin near together, you will produce the perfect equivalent of the squash, and I am persuaded the squash was originally so produced and that it is a hybridal plant. I perceive by these inquiries in your letter as well as by your express

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mention, that my latter letters have not reached you. I have regularly written to you once a year, and in one of these I answered these same inquiries fully. Should you be able to send me any plants of good fruit, and especially of peaches and *eating grapes*, they will be thankfully received and will be forwarded to me from any custom house of the United States. They

should leave your continent as early in autumn as they can be taken up. You mention that E. Randolph expected to recover from Alexander the value of certificates left in the hands of Webb. Webb, Alexander & E. R. are all bankrupt, the first dead. That is desperate therefore; nor do I know of any thing unsettled of yours in this country, from which anything is to be expected but the price of Colle and Anderson's bill. I think I shall be able finally to settle the affair of Colle on my return home, and to remit the amount of both to our friends V. Staphorst. I meant to have solicited his amount for Derieux and his wife, who are reduced to the most abject poverty. They have 8. or 10. children, who often need the first necessities of life. He is living on a small farm in one of the western counties, which some of us joined in buying a lease of for 20. years, and a horse &c. to stock it. He had before exhausted us in the article of contributions, so that this was the last he could expect. How far the change in your own situation renders this aid reasonably to be expected, is now questionable. You will have time to say yourself. Both the James Madisons, to wit, of Williamsbg and of Orange are living and well. The latter is now Secretary of State, but not yet come on. His father [*faded*]. He with Gallatin as Secretary of the Treasury, Genl. Dearborn, Secretary at War and Mr. Lincoln Attorney Genl compose the new administration of the U. S. The person proposed as Secretary of the Navy has not yet accepted. I add no signature because of the perils by land and sea to which this may be exposed, but you can be at no loss from whom it comes. I shall be happy to hear from you often. Accept assurances of my constant & affectionate friendship. Adieu.